

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 1a illustrates a puncture control tip 10 in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention. The puncture control tip 10 includes a tubular, hollow puncture control tip shaft 14 which ~~function~~ functions as a flash tube, as described in greater detail below. The shaft 14 includes a lumen 34 (see Figure 1c, for example) which extends longitudinally between proximal and distal ends. For reasons which will be readily appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art, lumen 34 can optionally be coated or otherwise provided with an interior surface which inhibits blood coagulation. By way of example and not of limitation, the lumen 34 can be coated with material including heparin (e.g., heparinized), tPa, or other functionally similar materials or compounds which inhibit or prevent blood from clotting or otherwise coagulating in the lumen 34.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

Preferably, the control tip is formed of a flexible, biocompatible material such as a thermosplastic. ~~by~~ By way of example and not of limitation, the material out of which

the control tip is formed has a Shore hardness between about 90A-82D, preferably between about 98A-74D, more preferably about 46D.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

Marker 36 is preferably attached to control tip 12, or less preferably positioned on the control tip ~~5~~ 12 so that it is difficult to slide them longitudinally relative to each other. The distal end 42 is spaced from the elongated central portion 22 of the control head by a distance X, described in greater detail below. Optionally, the control tip and the marker can be interconnected using a releasable proximal connection, e.g. a Touhy-Borst connector (for which the marker should include cross-drilled holes or the like for blood flash), ultrasonic welding, ~~glueing~~ gluing, etc.